

Wind farm On Lana'i

Yes___ No___

Alternative energy and renewable energy have been talked about for the last fifteen to twenty years. Why? To cut our dependency on fossil fuel, (oil). Solar, wind, bio fuel, nuclear power, natural gas and clean coal are our alternatives to oil. Our government has refused to allow the oil companies to drill any more wells in the U.S. because of pressure from the environmental groups. So we are dependent on oil from the middle eastern countries. With the turmoil going on there, oil prices have gone up and will continue to go up. So expect to see your electricity bill to continue to rise. Any savings you had with the solar panels are offset by higher oil prices.

Today we have an opportunity to change that and reap the benefits proposed by Hawaiian Electric and Castle and Cooke. Lana'i could become the energy island with solar, wind and bio-fuel energy possibilities. The other day I received a flyer in the mail from the so called " Friends of Lana'i" who are opposed to the wind farm project. This is a reply to that flyer. I cannot afford to send flyers in your mail box, so I hope Lana'i Today will print this in their paper. I will try to cover the subject matter in that flyer.

Yes, living on Lana'i is a choice. Our family, dad, mom, brother Cecil and I moved to Lana'i in 1937 in search of a better life. We traveled on the inter-island ship the S.S.Humuula. No inter-island flights at that time! So I have seen the many changes that have taken place on the island. Public bath and toilets to indoor plumbing, dirt roads to pave roads, cesspools to sewer lines and the most drastic from pineapple to the visitor industry, hotels and high end homes. All these changes have occurred and they have not changed my lifestyle in any way. In fact they have enhanced my lifestyle.

I work at the Kanepu'u Native Dry land Forest all year round and I see the traffic that goes to the other side. They are fishermen, hunters, hikers and visiting tourists. So most of the residents don't venture there. I question how that is going to change their lifestyle.

The letter claims that they speak for those who fear speaking out will cause them to loose their jobs. That is the same rhetoric that was used when the hotel was proposed. They poke at the amount of jobs that will be generated when every single job helps someone to stay on the island so they can enjoy the lifestyle. If each job supports a family of four, that twenty jobs will support eighty people. Considering our total population, that is a chunk of the population. The letter keeps mentioning Lana'i as our island. Let's face the fact that if you don't pay the property taxes it doesn't belong to you. Castle and Cooke owns more than ninety percent of the island. When you fly over that end of the island, all you see is a barren, arid and dry terrain. Nothing else is visible from that altitude. cultural sites and game animals will always be there if you want to go there and look for them on the ground.

The island of Oahu is part of Hawaii, not a foreign country. The implication is why should we supply Oahu with electricity from the wind farm. Many of us have families

and many friends there. We go there for better health care and emergencies. We go there for shopping, education and vacations and many other reasons. So let's live the "Aloha Spirit".

Castle and Cooke is not a charitable organization. They are in business for profit just like Blue Ginger, Canoes, 565, Richards and Pine Isle. If you keep showing a deficit (loss) you go bankrupt. The profits from the wind farm might off set the losses at the hotels and save the jobs there. But that is wishful thinking and second guessing! If the project goes south, there will be a time when the C&C board of directors will take a look at the losses at the hotel and come to an unfortunate decision. We can end up like our neighbor where the residents have to ferry to another island to work. That would put a dent in the lifestyle.

About the hunting issue, I have taught Hunter's Education for almost twenty years and we have taught our students that hunting is not a right. It is a privilege and the land owner has the last say. The Department of Land and Natural Resources lease for hunting on Lana'i ends next year and up for renegotiation. There is scuttlebutt around town that there is a private entity interested in leasing the property for private hunting. There will be competition there and could be the demise of public hunting on the island.

There will always be access for fishermen and those who want to visit our cultural antiquities. There are state laws that prohibits construction on or near the proximity of cultural sites.

So we come to a point where a person has to decide what's best for the person and their family. What will be our benefits if we support the wind farm project? Read the last issue of Lana'i Today.

If we decide to follow the advice of "Friends of Lana'i," what really do they offer? They offer you a Lifestyle? What are their solutions for jobs. You can't make a living on lifestyle. Ask yourselves questions, it's your future. Does it provide you with a job? Does it pay your mortgage or put food on your table. We, who are retired and those who work for the state and county don't have to worry. Us seniors collect our pensions, medicare and social security. The government pays the others from tax revenues.

So think about it before you make that decision. If you would like to talk to me personally, my phone number is 565-6672. Mahalo for your kind attention.

Bob Hera
Long time Lana'i resident.